

We need a review into inequality, but it must be done b...

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I am a signatory to this letter in the [Guardian](#) this morning questioning whether the IFS has asked the right people with the right balance of views and experience to review inequality in the UK:

We welcome the idea of a major review of inequality ([Britain 'risks heading to US levels of inequality'](#), 14 May). With Brexit looming and recent analyses linking income inequality to voting for rightwing populists, mass shootings, mental ill health, status consumerism and domestic violence, this is indeed a critical issue for our times.

However, there is widespread concern about the composition of this review's "expert panel", which has a majority of white economists. Although the panel includes an expert on health inequalities, none of the world's leading experts on the health and psychosocial effects of income inequality itself are included, nor is there expertise in the spatial aspects of inequality. And there is a conspicuous absence of world-leading economists for whom income inequality is their primary focus — no Piketty, no Stiglitz, no Galbraith, no Frank, no Fitoussi, no Palma, no Chang, no Milanovic. Sir Angus Deaton, leading the review, [stated in the journal Science in 2014 that he "get\[s\] angry"](#) about the theory that inequality has psychological and social effects on health — perhaps he has changed his mind now that his own research has uncovered rising deaths from addiction and suicide in the US, but there are many researchers with much greater depth in this area. Even more troubling, there is no ethnic minority representation on the "expert panel", no people with lived experience of inequality, no representatives of charities, trade unions or other NGOs. The number of disciplines represented is also small, although the impact of inequality goes far beyond economics.

We, and others, have been researching, educating and campaigning on inequality for many years, we understand the issues and we know what needs to be done. We cannot wait five years for a report from a worryingly elitist review. Getting policymakers and politicians to tackle inequality will require grassroots support from those most affected and is needed urgently.

Kate Pickett Professor of epidemiology and research champion for justice and

equality, University of York

Richard Wilkinson Emeritus professor of social epidemiology, University of Nottingham

Danny Dorling Harold Mackinder professor of geography, University of Oxford

Barbara Stallan Director of economic geography, University of Groningen

Guy Standing Professor of development studies, Soas, University of London

Roberto De Vogli Associate professor, department of development and social

psychology, and Human Rights Centre, University of Padua

Paul C Sutton Professor of geography and the environment, University of

Denver

Susan Himmelweit Emeritus professor of economics, Open University,

Women's Budget Group

Dr Johnna Montgomery Reader in international political economy, King's

College London

Dirk Philipsen Associate research professor of economic history, Duke

University

Ruth Pearson Emeritus professor of development studies, University of

Leeds, and management committee, Women's Budget Group

Dr Andrea Westall Senior visiting fellow, Open University, and Commissioner

for Sustainable Equality

Charlotte Brien Professor of law, University of York

Michael Pilson Associate professor of management, global sustainability, and

social entrepreneurship, Fordham University

Louka I Katseli Professor of economics, National and Kapodistrian University

of Athens, and co-chair of the Independent Commission on Sustainable

Equality, Progressive Society

Lindsay Stringer Professor of environment and development, University of

Leeds

Julia K Steinberger Professor of social ecology and ecological economics,

University of Leeds

Hunter Lovins President, Natural Capitalism Solutions

Jonathan Blandshaw Professor emeritus of social policy, University of York

Robert Gostanza VC's chair in public policy, Australian National University,

University of South Australia

Link Chen Professor of health policy, University of York

Mary Anne Mercer Senior lecturer emerita, Department of Global Health,

University of Washington

Dr Stephen Bezručka Senior lecturer in health services and global health,

University of Washington

Roger Burrows Professor of cities, Newcastle University

Ida Kubiszewski Associate professor in public policy, Australian National

University

Rev Skeggs Professor of sociology, University of Lancaster

Rowland Atkinson Research chair in inclusive societies, University of

Sheffield

Krista-Fl Vala Ragnarsdóttir Professor of sustainability science, University of

Iceland

Richard Murphy Professor of practice in international political economy, City,

University of London and director of Tax Research UK

Jacqueline McGlade Professor of resilience and sustainable development,

University College London

Mammi Morrison Trustee, Tax Watch

Nick Meynen Policy officer for environmental and economic justice, European

Environmental Bureau